



DIVE

Church
Sanctuary Mission

PREVIEW

POOR

Community

God

Dive
Year 3, Unit 6

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**THE POOR IN SPIRIT,
FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.**

“Blessed

Matthew 5:3-10

**THE MEEK, FOR THEY WILL
INHERIT THE EARTH.**

THE

PREVIEW

THOSE WHO MOURN, FOR THEY WILL BE COMFORTED.

**THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST
FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOR THEY WILL BE**

d are...

”

THE PEACEMAKERS, FOR THEY WILL BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD.

MERCIFUL, FOR THEY WILL BE SHOWN MERCY.

PREVIEW

THE PURE IN HEART, FOR THEY WILL SEE GOD.

THOSE WHO ARE PERSECUTED BECAUSE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

T FOR
E FILLED.

**Circle the quality that
you want to develop this
week.**

3

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Q

I've heard the term "missional" lately in relationship to church. What does that mean?

A We all know that "church" is not a building or a place. Rather, "church" is the people of God, the "called out" ones, the bearers of Jesus Christ in our neighborhoods, workplaces, and world. But members of the church, rather than remaining in one location, must also see themselves as the "sent ones."

On his website www.friendofmissional.org, Rick Meigs writes, "Missional is a helpful term used to describe what happens when you and I replace the 'come to us' invitations with a 'go to them' life—a life where 'the way of Jesus' informs and radically transforms our existence to one wholly focused on sacrificially living for him and others and where we adopt a missionary stance in relation to our culture."

How do we do this? By seeking to put the good of our neighbor over our own, by practicing hospitality and welcoming the stranger into the midst of our community, and by simply and purely placing ourselves into the lives of others around us and loving them as Jesus would.

—Victor Ko

Rev. Victor Ko is pastor of Mosaic House Community Church in Edmonton, Alberta.


Reprinted from The Banner, Jan 2011
(www.thebanner.org)

Use this space to record personal thoughts about how you can make changes in your life this week to begin embracing the qualities of the Beatitudes in order to be the light of Jesus to the world around you.

Your thoughts can be in the form of goals, a prayer, or a to-do list. Be creative and realistic! This is between you and God.

PREVIEW





As you listen to
a worship song, use
this space to record
what the lyrics mean
in your own words.
Feel free to draw
pictures too.

PREVIEW



Leader: “Listen to my Message, you Sodom-schooled leaders.

Students: Receive God’s revelation, you Gomorrah-schooled people.

Leader: “Why this frenzy of sacrifices?” God’s asking.

Students: “Don’t you think I’ve had my fill of burnt sacrifices, rams and plump grain-fed calves?

Leader: Don’t you think I’ve had my fill of blood from bulls, lambs, and goats?

Students: When you come before me, whoever gave you the idea of acting like this,

Leader: Running here and there, doing this and that—all this sheer commotion in the place provided for worship?

Students: “Quit your worship charades. I can’t stand your trivial religious games:

Leader: Monthly conferences, weekly Sabbaths, special meetings—meetings, meetings, meetings—I can’t stand one more!

Students: Meetings for this, meetings for that. I hate them!

Leader: You’ve worn me out! I’m sick of your religion, religion, religion, while you go right on sinning.

Students: When you put on your next prayer-performance, I’ll be looking the other way.

Leader: No matter how long or loud or often you pray, I’ll not be listening.

Students: And do you know why?

Leader: Because you’ve been tearing people to pieces, and your hands are bloody.

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Isaiah 1:10-15 from The Message

Isaiah 1:16-20 from The Message

Students: Go home and wash up. Clean up your act.

Leader: Sweep your lives clean of your evil doings so I don't have to look at them any longer.

Students: Say no to wrong. Learn to do good.
Work for justice.

Leader: Help the down-and-out. Stand up for the homeless. Go to bat for the defenseless.

Students: "Come. Sit down. Let's argue this out." This is God's Message:

Leader: "If your sins are blood-red, they'll be snow-white. If they're red like crimson, they'll be like wool."

Students: If you'll willingly obey,
you'll feast like kings.

Leader: But if you're willful and stubborn,
you'll die like dogs."

Students: That's right.
God says so.

Isaiah 1:16: Wash and
make yourselves clean.
Take your evil
of my sight.
w...

*Choose one of the following verses from the NIV.
Make some notes about what this verse means for life
today and then use those thoughts to create a visual
representation to serve as a reminder of how Christ
calls believers to live.*



Isaiah 1:17b: Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.

Isaiah 1:19: If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land.

Isaiah 1:17a: Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.

PREVIEW

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needs out
sent; stop doing
ong.

Ann Arbor Church Provides Shelter

by Jeff Arnold

March 16, 2012 — The 22 foam mattresses are spread across a large room on the ground floor of Ann Arbor (Mich.) Christian Reformed Church, offering a peaceful night's rest for men who otherwise wouldn't have a place to sleep.

Over the previous four months, the men have found temporary homes in 23 area houses of worship. It is part of a rotating shelter program that links a county-wide program with the faith community to reach an ever-growing community of people who are homeless.

That community in Washtenaw County fluctuates each year between 2,000 and 3,000 residents. A lack of affordable housing around Ann Arbor and a shortage of state funding for the county's shelter program only makes matters worse.

That's where the rotating shelter program has been a welcome relief, opening up churches such as Ann Arbor CRC, which has participated in the program for the past 30 years.

"It's humbling," said church member Todd Redder, who has been active with the program



E Volunteers pack up foam mattresses provided by Washtenaw County's rotating shelter program.

for the past nine years. "You come in, maybe you're worried about a presentation you have at work the next day, and these men come in and they're just glad to have a place to sleep."

Redder depends on about 60 church members to fill 100 slots during the week the shelter is housed at Ann Arbor CRC. Volunteers provide transportation and food for the men as well as split overnight shifts, meeting the needs of those calling the church home for the week.

During the week, volunteers interact with clients, helping

them better understand the plight the people who lack homes face—especially during cold winter months.

The rotating shelter program runs between early November and the final week of March.

"What I like about it is that it's social justice in action," said Shoshana Mandel, one of the program's co-coordinators. "It's about as active as you can get. It's shelter but it's so much more than that. The warmth is almost palpable."

Reprinted from *The Banner*, 2012. (www.thebanner.org)

Start praying by drawing a shape on your paper.

Inside that shape write something to pray for.

Add marks and shapes, focusing on the words you wrote.

Ask God to be part of your prayer time.

If words come, pray them; if not, enjoy the silence.

This prayer method works particularly well when:

- 1) You want to pray but words escape you.
- 2) Sitting still and staying focused in prayer are a challenge.
- 3) Your body wants to be part of your prayer.
- 4) You want to just hang out with God, but don't know how.
- 5) Listening to God feels like an impossible task.
- 6) Your mind wanders and your body complains.
- 7) You want a visual, concrete way to pray.
- 8) You need a new way to pray.

From www.prayingincolor.com. Used with permission.

Praying in Color

PREVIEW



PREVIEW

Narrator 1: As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the Lord's people who lived in Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years.

Peter: "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat."

Aeneas: (gets up and rolls up his mat)

Narrator 2: Immediately Aeneas got up. All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

Narrator 2: In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor.

Narrator 1: About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room.

Narrator 3: Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him,

Disciple: "Please come at once!"

Narrator 2: Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

Narrator 3: Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said,

Peter: "Tabitha, get up."

Narrator 1: She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up.

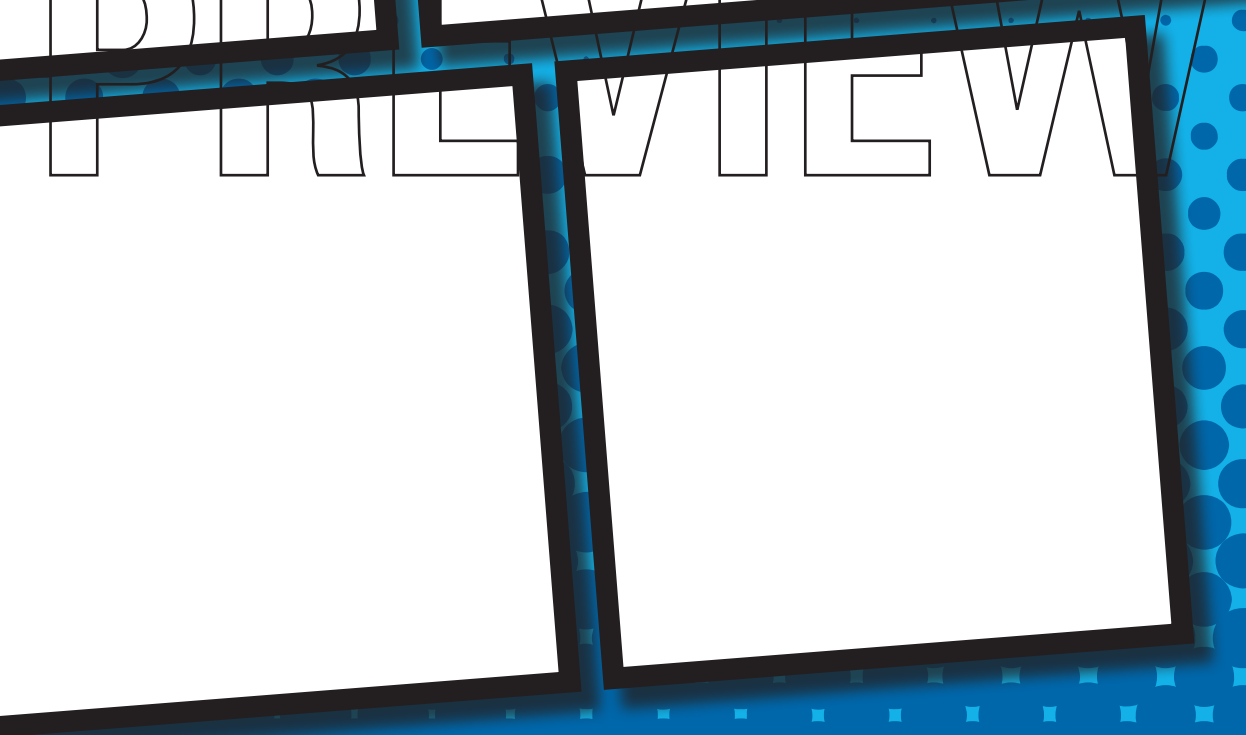
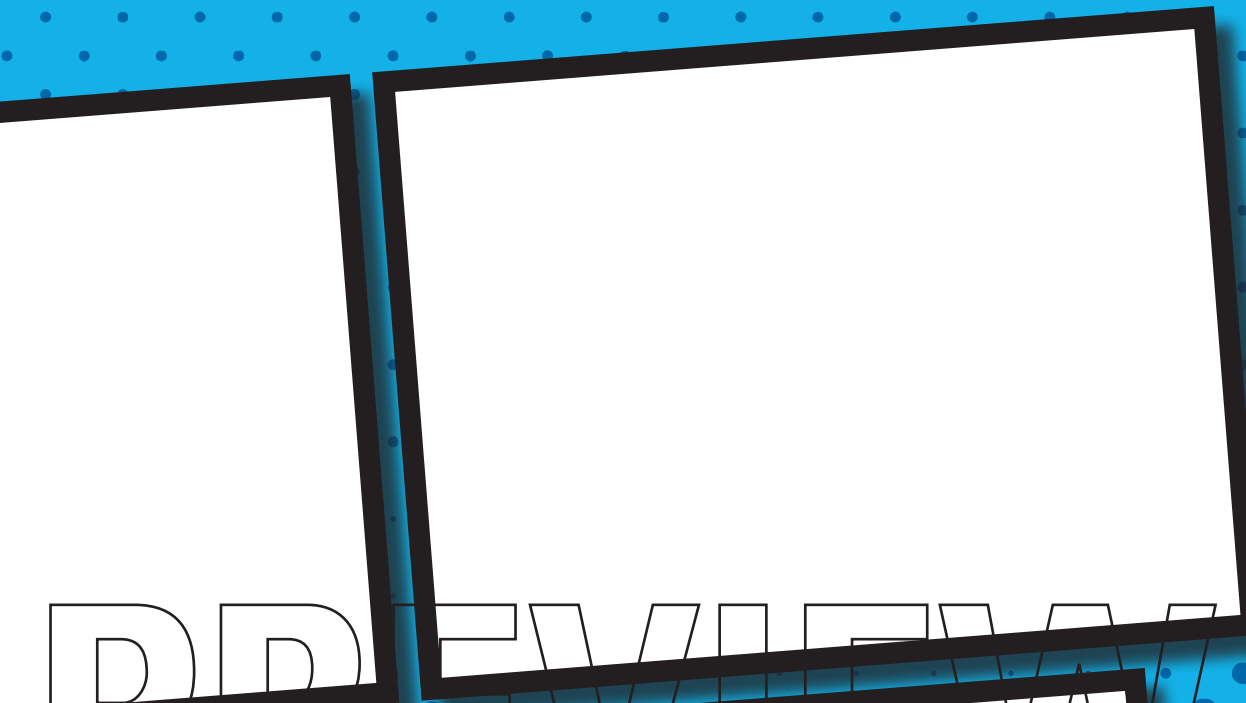
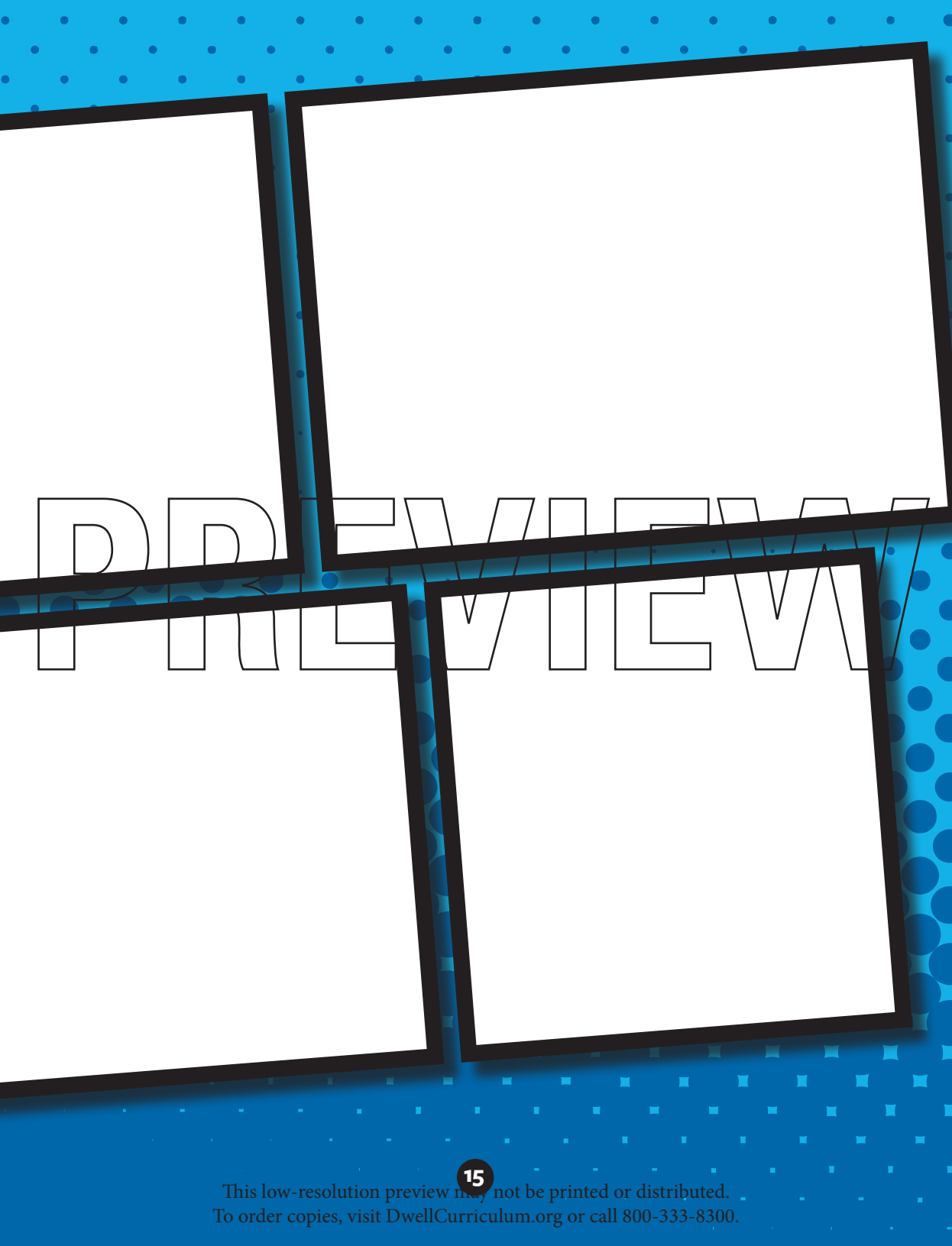
Tabitha/Dorcus: (open eyes and sit up)

Narrator 2: He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive.

Narrator 3: This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

—Scripture adapted from Acts 9:32-43

PREVIEW



PREVIEW

A Place to Belong

A multifaceted ministry for people with disabilities is thriving at Fair Haven Ministries in Hudsonville, Michigan.

At the heart of His Image Ministries (HIM) is Fun Sunday, one Sunday afternoon each month when people with disabilities—known at HIM as “friends”—gather for two hours of worship, crafts, games, and other activities. “It’s a wonderful way for friends to get social needs met that they may not get on a day-to-day basis,” says Jeanette Mutersbaugh, director of HIM.

HIM doesn’t serve only people with disabilities—it comes alongside their families, too. While Fun Sunday is going on, there’s also a caregivers support group for the parents and guardians of children and adults with disabilities. “It’s really become a time of parents of special needs children coming together as a way of supporting each other, talking about their struggles and needs, brainstorming, sharing life together,” says Mutersbaugh.

HIM also focuses on how to engage people with disabilities in the life of the church. It works with student ministry leaders to better understand ways to help specific students with various accommodations. For example, Mutersbaugh says certain students may function better when they know the schedule ahead of time and may struggle to adapt to unexpected changes. “We try to help people with different abilities function successfully in our children’s or student ministries with simple modifications,” she says.

Another HIM ministry, a GLUE team (Giving, Loving, Understanding, Encouraging) was started by two special education teachers on the HIM

leadership team. “They talk with [the families] to find out where they are right now and discover what we as a church can do to meet their needs,” says Mutersbaugh. “We’re finding out how we can plug in people with special needs if they want to be involved, as well as finding out what’s going on in the lives of families.”

Through the GLUE team, they discovered that one young person was interested in joining Fair Haven’s adult choir. Another young man now serves on the facilities team helping to stack chairs.

Mutersbaugh has seen a lot of spiritual and personal growth in her one and a half years as director of His Image Ministries. She says she was especially touched by a conversation during a large group devotional in September.

“We were talking about how everybody is part of the body of Christ and part of the church and everybody has things they’re good at and things they’re not so good at. I was speaking with two young men, and we were talking about what we were and weren’t good at. One of the young men said he really struggled at making friends. The other guy looked at him and said, ‘I’m your friend.’ They really didn’t know each other a year and a half ago, but now they’re affirming each other.”

What’s your “disability awareness”? For more information go to www.rca.org/disability.

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Write each of these verses in your own words:

Proverbs 14:21

It is a sin to despise one's neighbor, but blessed is the one who is kind to the needy.

Mark 12:31

"The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater...."

Romans 13:10

Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Romans 15:2

Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up.

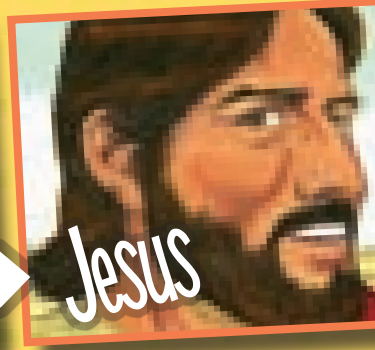
James 4:12

There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?

PREVIEW

Parable

Jesus often taught lessons to people through the stories he told. In today's Scripture, Jesus takes the opportunity to teach an important lesson about what it means to help people in need of mercy and compassion.



Jews

The people Jesus was speaking to considered themselves pure descendants of Abraham, making them "true Jews." They sought to uphold the laws in the Old Testament, some of them considering themselves experts in both following and understanding the laws. These people often felt it was best to interact only with others who believed as they did.



The Trip

It was 18 miles from Jerusalem to Jericho. The area had long stretches of road that were surrounded by hills and rocks where thieves and thugs could easily hide. It was a very dangerous area for travelers. It was also difficult to identify if the injured traveler was of Jewish descent or even still alive.



Today only two small groups of Samaritans still live in the land—one near Nablus and one near Tel Aviv.

Priest

This man was a high-ranking religious leader, born into his position as an official minister or worship leader. Priests needed to avoid contact with blood in order to remain ceremonially “clean” and able to make sacrifices in the temple. This priest avoided the problem of making himself unclean by passing by on the other side of the road.

Levite

A Levite was a temple official from the tribe of Levi whose task in life was to study and interpret the Scriptures. Levites served as assistants to the priest, taking care of the temple. This man also sought to keep himself holy and fit for service by avoiding the injured traveler.

Samaritans

During the time of the Old Testament the area of Samaria was inhabited by Israelites, God’s chosen people. However, after a time Samaria was conquered by the Assyrians in 722-721 BC. Foreigners came to live in the area and married the Israelites, bringing with them idolatry and worship of pagan gods. Therefore, the Samaritans were a mixed race contaminated by foreign blood and false worship. Because of this contamination they were despised by the Jews.



Sweet Publishing/FreeBibleimages

Leader: Those who had been scattered by Stephen's death traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, but they were still only speaking and dealing with their fellow Jews.

Students: Then some of the men from Cyprus and Cyrene who had come to Antioch started talking to Greeks, giving them the Message of the Master Jesus.

Leader: God was pleased with what they were doing and put his stamp of approval on it—quite a number of the Greeks believed and turned to the Master.

Students: When the church in Jerusalem got wind of this, they sent Barnabas to Antioch to check on things.

Leader: As soon as he arrived, he saw that God was doing it all. He threw himself in with them, got behind them to stay with it the rest of their lives. He was enthusiastic and confident in the Holy Spirit.

REVIEW

Leader:
intens
laid ha

s behind and in
d them, urging them
a good man that way,
Spirit's ways.

Students: The community grew large and strong in the Master.

Leader: Then Barnabas went on to Tarsus to look for Saul. He found him and brought him back to Antioch. They were there a whole year, meeting with the church and teaching a lot of people.

Students: It was in Antioch that the disciples were for the first time called Christians.

Leader: Barnabas and Saul, once they had delivered the relief offering to the church in Jerusalem, went back to Antioch. This time they took John with them, the one they called Mark.

Students: The congregation in Antioch was blessed with a number of prophet-preachers and teachers:

Leader: Barnabas, Simon, nicknamed Niger, Lucius the Cyrenian, Manaen, an advisor to the ruler Herod, Saul.

Students: One day as they were worshiping God—they were also fasting as they waited for guidance—the Holy Spirit spoke: “Take Barnabas and Saul and commission them for the work I have called them to do.”

er: So they commissioned them. In that circle of
ity and obedience, of fasting and praying, they
nds on their heads and sent them off.

DWELL

Acts 11:19-26 & 12:25-13:3

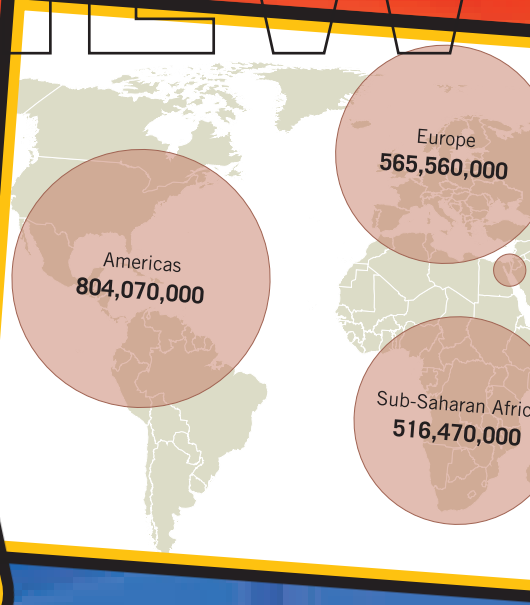
from The Message

In 2010 - According to



Pew Research Center, "Global Christianity-A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population," © Dec., 2011.

United States had the most Christians in the world by sheer number - 79.5% of the whole United States population

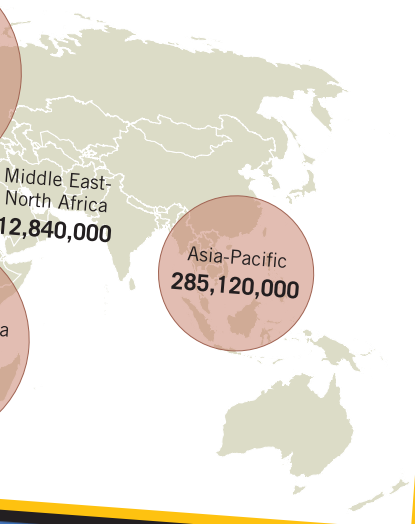


Pew Research Center, "Global Christianity-A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population," © Dec., 2011.

Pew Research Center

Estimated that
31.7% of the total
population worldwide
is Christian

Countries with highest
percentage of Christians
– Vatican City,
Romania,
Papua New Guinea



Countries with less than .1%
of population claiming to be
Christian: Afghanistan, Yemen,
Somalia, Morocco, Iran, Turkey,
Cambodia, Bangladesh

PREVIEW

1. What was your role in the early Christian church? Why do you think the efforts to spread its message?

2. Why do you think that Saul and Barnabas would make good missionaries?

3. How has the church changed since more people, including Gentiles, have come to know the saving grace of Jesus Christ?

4. What do you hope the church will look like 2,000 years from now?

Saul

A convert to Christianity, Saul was one of the first Gentiles to share the good news of the gospel with the Gentiles (belonging to a Jewish decent).

support

Characters

Barnabas

Name means “encourager” and was one of the leaders of the Christian church in Jerusalem

Simon

One of the Christian prophets and teachers in the church of Antioch. Some scholars believe he may have been the same person who carried the cross of Christ, but there is no evidence to support this theory.

Lucius

“The Cyrenian”—Cyrene was a large city on the north coast of Africa that had a large population of Jews.

Manaen

Advisor to the ruler Herod. Herod is suspected to have attempted to win the favor of his Jewish subjects by opposing the Jewish Christian church and its leaders.

to Christianity. After many were persecuting and killing Christians, Manaen was passionate about spreading the news of Christ with the help of believers who were not of

PREVIEW

Bibles for

Long-awaited Bibles are delivered deep in Nicaragua's rainforest

In 1998 Hurricane Mitch left a trail of devastation along the east coast of Nicaragua. Burt was a member of a work team to a Miskito Indian village called Siksayari.

He was getting ready for church one Sunday morning when his

Miskito interpreter, David Cleban, who knew he was a veterinarian, came running. "Burt, you gotta come fix cow."

"We had brought some medical supplies with us, so I grabbed those," says Burt. A Miskito man led Burt to a village where the cow was tied to a house. Men had been drinking homemade brew the night before, and someone had



hacked the cow with a machete. "She had an 18-inch hole in her side," says Burt. "David, the interpreter, said, 'We can't fix cow, we gonna eat her.'"

"But it was the farmer's only cow. I got some nylon suture material and some soap to clean her up with. It didn't seem like it would work, because it was fine suture, designed for people, not cows. Her legs were tied together, and we sewed her up." Six months later, Burt returned, and to his amazement, the cow had survived. He says, "In all the years I've been a vet, I was never paid as well as with that farmer's smile. He was so happy we saved his cow."

The call for Bibles

When Hurricane Felix wiped out Miskito villages in 2007, Burt

again traveled to Nicaragua with a group from his church. On that trip, he says, "the group of Miskito people living along the coast asked if we could help supply Bibles in their own language; they had lost their Bibles when their churches were destroyed in the hurricane. It took three years, but we were able to get them 500 Bibles."

Then, in January 2012, David Aquire of the Bible Society of Nicaragua sent Burt an email letting him know that many more

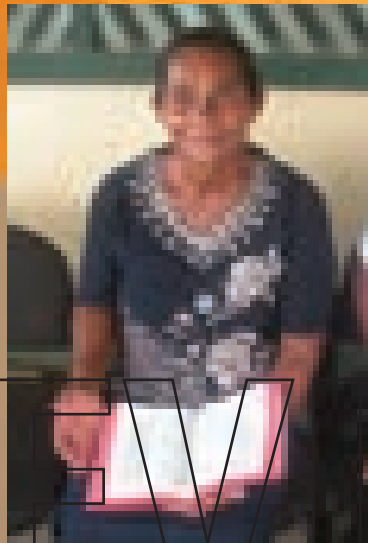


Nicaragua

Miskito people, especially those living along the Río Coco, had no Bibles. Most Miskito villages perch on the banks of the Río Coco, deep in the rainforest. The river is the only way to reach them.

A limited-time offer

Aquire asked if Burt could find a way to get Bibles to Miskito people on the Río Coco. He also told Burt that a benefactor in Managua had offered to donate \$7 of the \$12 it would cost for each Miskito Bible. There was just one hitch. His offer would expire on March 1. In February, Burt made an announcement to his church. “We needed to raise \$15,000 for 3,000 Bibles and had three weeks to do it,” he says. They placed a donation box in the foyer. “In three Sundays our people put in \$21,000, enough to take 1,000 more Bibles than we had planned.”



Distributing the Bibles in the rainforest

“We spent eight days on the Río Coco. Our interpreter knew everybody.” They brought Bibles to 29 villages by dugout canoe, going as far as rapids that made it too dangerous to go on. At the rapids they held a service with 11 pastors and 11 village leaders and distributed 500 Bibles. Some of the pastors and leaders had walked a whole day to get there and then carried Bibles back with them.

Then the team took rugged roads to bring Bibles to two large interior villages. Finally they went down the coast in a 22-foot boat

to distribute another 900 Bibles. On the three-hour trip back, they faced eight- to 10-foot waves. “No one had life jackets. The guys were praying so hard,” Burt says. “When we got back we learned we had caught the tail end of a hurricane.”

The response

In spite of all the hazards, Burt says, “none of us guys deserved for the Lord to let us serve him this way. We were so humbled to see the desire the Miskito people had to receive a Bible in their own language.”

“In one church an 82-year-old man got up to sing a song of thanks; he had been praying all his life that they would have a Bible.”

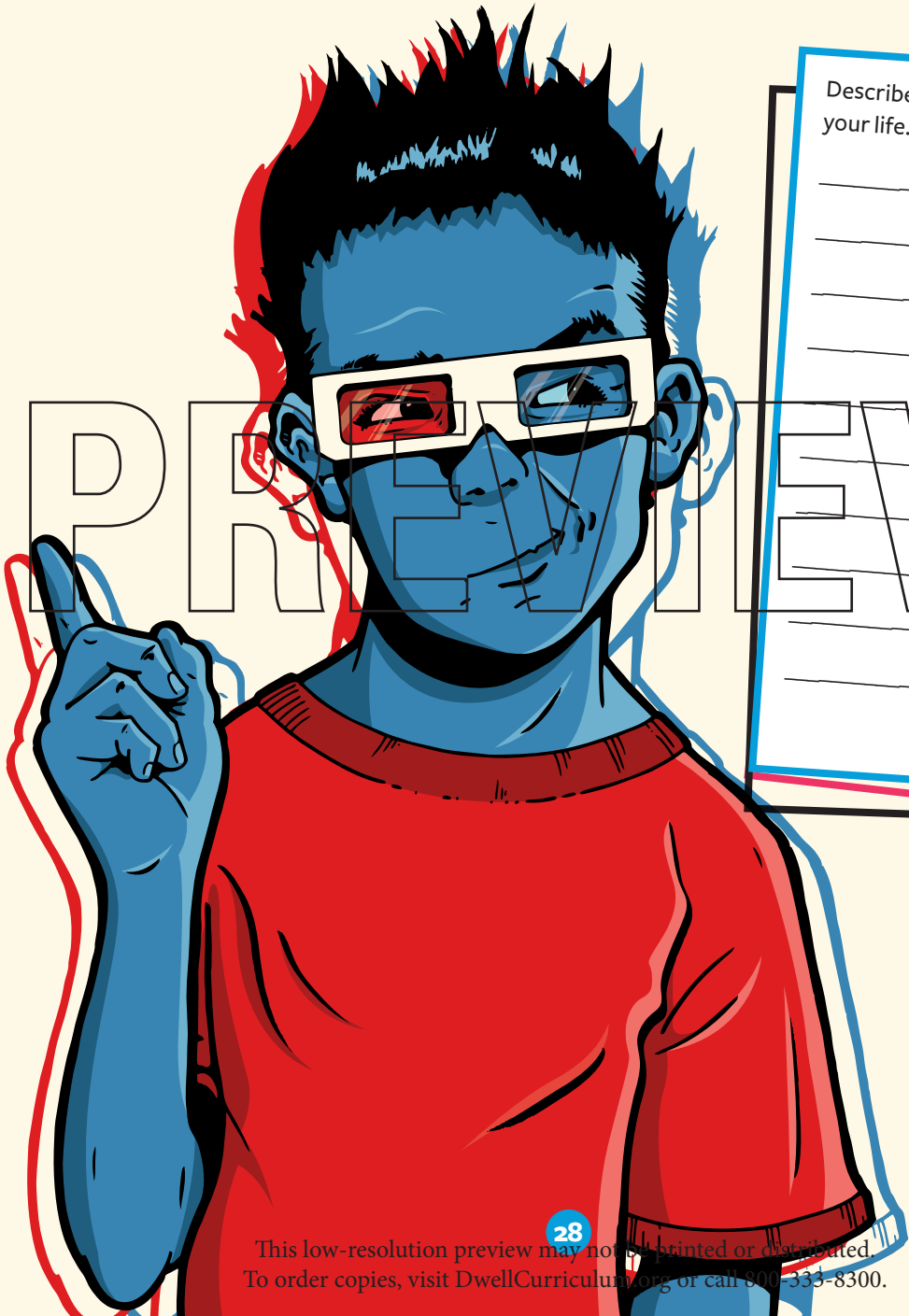
Many Miskito people still need Bibles. Burt would love other churches to join in and invites interested churches to contact him. “Your church would be such a blessing to the Miskito people, and your church would receive a great blessing in return.”

Congregations interested in learning more can contact Burt Wiersma at bgwcow@gmail.com or (920) 324-9518, or call RCA Global Mission at (800) 968-3943, ext. 243.

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Your Faith Story



Describe how you know that you
your life.

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” —from 1 Peter 3:15

need God in

Who are some of the significant people who have helped you on your family journey?

PREVIEW

What were some of the major events in your faith story? How do you see God working in your life now?



Use this space to create a word cloud describing your church or youth group.

PREVIEW

Colossians 1: 3-14, NIV

³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you. ⁴We thank him because we have heard about your faith in Christ Jesus. We have also heard that you love all of God's people.

⁵Your faith and love are based on the hope you have. What you hope for is stored up for you in heaven. You have already heard about it. You were told about it when the message of truth was given to you. I'm talking about the good news ⁶that has come to you.

All over the world the good news is bearing fruit and growing. It has been doing that among you since the day you heard it. That is when you understood God's grace in all its truth.

⁷You learned the good news from Epaphras. He is dear to us. He serves Christ together with us. He faithfully works for Christ and for us among you. ⁸He also told us about your love that comes from the Holy Spirit.

⁹That's why we have not stopped praying for you. We have been praying for you since the day we heard about you. We have been asking God to fill you with the knowledge of what he wants. We pray that he will give you spiritual wisdom and understanding.

¹⁰We pray that you will lead a life that is worthy of the Lord. We pray that you will please him in every way. So we want you to bear fruit in every good thing you do. We want you to grow to know God better. ¹¹We want you to be very strong, in keeping with his glorious power. We want you to be patient. Never give up. Be joyful ¹²as you give thanks to the Father.

He has made you fit to share with all his people. You will all receive a share in the kingdom of light.

¹³He has saved us from the kingdom of darkness. He has brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves. ¹⁴Because of what the Son has done, we have been set free. Because of him, all of our sins have been forgiven.

1. Using 11 words or less, write a summary of this passage.

2. Which verse do you like the best? Write it out here.

3. How does Paul describe this community of believers? (verses 4-6)

4. What does Paul ask God for on behalf of this community? (verses 9-11)

5. According to Paul, what has God saved us from? What have we been given, through Jesus, as a result? (verses 13-14)

6. Write a personal challenge based on what you have learned. It should be a measurable goal that you will focus on this week.

1 Timothy 4:12

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

PREVIEW

Dive, Year 3, Unit 6

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